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ordeal'. He brings a sheep to the village where the girl is; a corner of the animal's ear is cut off and the piece put into a bowl of water and the man, the girl and the baby are sprinkled with the resultant blood and water. If by the following morning the child is still alive the man is adjudged to have lied and must pay compensation as above. If, however, the baby should die during the night, then the girl is held to have accused the man falsely.

During the reign of King Kur, whose despotic methods of government resulted in his being removed from office, a much grimmer and more realistic trial by ordeal was enacted. The man and the girl were brought to a channel of the Nile where a large crocodile habitually dwelt. By some means this brute was called up from the depths and the pair placed equidistant from it were made to swim across the channel, or, if they could not swim, were launched on flimsy rafts. The one that the crocodile seized was deemed to be guilty of lying. It is on record that one youth about to be put to the test in this manner protested thus, 'I know that I am innocent all right, but how does the crocodile know that?'

After the proceedings of the naming and the trying of the lovers is concluded, the mother is allowed to have her child. If it should be a boy, the father, who has been informed of the birth and sex of the child though as yet he is not allowed to see him, sends a present of a miniature harpoon, presumably indicative of his desire that his son should grow up to be a mighty hunter of hippopotami. Then a small basket is woven and filled with ashes of burnt cow dung. One of the baby's maternal uncles hangs the basket round his waist calling upon Nyikang to bless the child and to make him a good husbandman. (The basket containing the ashes represents the large family basket filled with grain.) He then walks round the hut where the baby is, beats upon the wall with the basket and then throws it into the road. If the child is a girl the ashes are mixed with water and the uncle makes models of a bull and a cow. Nyikang's blessing is invoked upon the child that at her marriage she may command a good

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dowry. The models are hung up in front of the hut and the ceremony is concluded with beer-drinking.

About a month later the child may be taken home to be shown to its father. The mother carrying the infant is accompanied by three or four girl friends and the old woman who attended her at the confinement. The father and his male relatives and friends inspect the baby outside the hut to satisfy themselves that it shows no deformity or any other abnormality. If such unhappily were the case, the child would be enclosed together with a live sheep in a basket and thrown into the Nile. When the father is satisfied that the child is normal, a goat or sheep is killed, the meat eaten at the ensuing feast and the skin scraped and softened to serve as a sleeping mat for the baby. Beer is prepared and the whole village invited to come to the party. Those who come, however, are expected to bring some small gifts of money, beads, bracelets and the like. These are the perquisites of the midwife, the beer makers and the girls who escorted the mother and child back to her home.

There are no special ceremonies for the birth of children after the first born, and the mother may or may not return to her father's village for her confinements as she pleases. There is however a little feast to celebrate the birth and, as before, a sheep or goat is killed and the skin used as the infant's sleeping mat.

During a woman's pregnancy neither she nor her husband is permitted to visit anyone who is sick. They are considered to be unlucky and their visit to a sick person would surely result in his death. The most that is allowed is that they may stand at the fence surrounding the house where the sick person is and enquire after him.

With reference to the custom of the young wife leaving her husband's home for her father's for the birth of her first child, it must be mentioned that the wives of the king, not merely on the occasion of their first born, but for all subsequent confinements, must leave Fashoda. They do not go to their former home, however, but to the village of some chief at a considerable distance from the capital. The child that is